



Frequently Asked Questions For Voters

What is a Top 2 Primary?

The Top 2 Primary allows voters to choose among all candidates running for each office. Voters do not have to declare a party affiliation to vote.

The two candidates who receive the most votes in the Primary Election qualify for the General Election. Candidates must also receive at least 1% of the votes cast in that race to advance to the General Election.

What does "party preference" mean?

Each candidate for partisan office may state a political party that he or she prefers. A candidate's preference does not imply that the candidate is nominated or endorsed by the party, or that the party approves of or associates with that candidate.

How did the Top 2 Primary become law?

The Top 2 Primary was passed by the people in 2004 as an initiative. I-872 passed by almost 60%. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the new law in March.

What offices are affected?

The Top 2 Primary applies to elections for partisan office. This includes the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, the State Legislature, partisan statewide offices such as Governor, and partisan county offices such as County Commissioner or County Treasurer.

The Top 2 Primary does not apply to elections for

- President and Vice President;
- Nonpartisan offices, such as judicial office, municipal office, or a fire district or school board;
- Pierce County will use a different system for choosing some county offices.

Can a voter still write-in a candidate?

Yes. Each race on the ballot will still have a write-in line for a voter to write in the name of a candidate.

When is the Primary?

The State's first Top 2 Primary is August 19, 2008.



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What are the deadlines to register for the August 19 Primary?

Voters have until July 19, 2008 to register to vote or update their voter information for the August 19 Primary.

Citizens not currently registered in Washington State have until August 4, 2008 to register in-person at their local election office.

When do ballots go out?

Overseas and military ballots will be mailed July 20, 2008.

Mail ballots will be sent to voters on August 1, 2008.

When is the latest I can turn in my completed ballot?

Ballots must be postmarked, or deposited at a designated location, before 8:00 p.m. on August 19, 2008.

Where can I find more information about the Top 2 Primary?

The Secretary of State's Office posts information about I-872, on its website at www.vote.wa.gov.